

## Vermont Blueprint for Health

### Bringing Communities on Board

The Blueprint vision is that *Vermont will have a statewide system of care that improves the lives of individuals with and at risk for chronic conditions*. Change of this magnitude requires action at all levels, but most critical is that change must happen where people live, work and play and where they receive their health care.

*Community-focused initiatives* were begun with two pilot communities in 2005 in Bennington and St. Johnsbury. Additional communities will have the same opportunity in 2006, with more added each year until the entire state is covered.

**Self-management** is the cornerstone of day-to-day care for all chronic conditions. Everyone can become good self-managers and make *smart choices* if they have the *powerful tools* of information, skills and support they need. Expectation: Every community will offer the Healthier Living Workshop throughout the year in multiple locations. The Healthier Living Workshop is a program that has been demonstrated to be effective in helping people better manage their health and reduce their use of expensive services.

- Identify a local leader to manage all logistics and link to the Department of Health.
- Ensuring a cadre of lay and professional staff to be trained to offer the Workshop
- Recruit participants for the Workshop
- Coordinate with disease specific self-management programs offered in the community such as the American Diabetes Association “Learning to Live Well with Diabetes”.
- Link with provider practices and other Blueprint for Health activities in the community.

**Community activation and support** is a *powerful tool* in helping people make and sustain the *smart choices* that will make them healthier. Walking programs have been demonstrated to have a positive effect on health and will be the first programs developed in the community.

Expectation: Vermont communities will implement programs and share information about the availability of services that support a healthier lifestyle.

- Identify a local leader to manage community physical activity programs and link to the Department of Health.
- Establish or expand walking groups to provide friendship and support in all towns with a population of 2000 or more.
- Establish a program for individual “contracting” with another person (friend or family member) to complete specified levels of physical activity daily or weekly.
- Develop an outreach/ marketing strategy to encourage participation
- Link with provider practices and other Blueprint for Health activities in the community.
- List the walking program(s) and other healthy living programs with Vermont 211 and include the website in marketing materials.

Include one or more of the following environmental or policy strategies:

- Improve the physical environment to make use of trails and sidewalks more attractive such as landscaping, improved lighting and safety improvements

- distribute maps of desirable walking or biking routes in your community
- Advocate for spaces to be available during “off hours” such as schools or malls being open before or after business hours.
- Work with constituents, partners, and town planners to improve, create, and/or build facilities such as walking trails, sidewalks, bike paths or other facilities.

***Physician and other health care providers*** must also adopt new, more *powerful tools* to deliver the right care at the right time to people with chronic illnesses. Expectation: Improved office systems, good decision support and an integrated health information system will be available to help health care providers deliver proactive care.

- Identify a local provider champion to assist with provider recruitment, training and participation in the Blueprint and link to the Department of Health.
- Recruit 75 percent of primary care practices in the area to participate
- Coordinate training for participating providers and practice staff
- Provide financial support for participating practices to offset the costs of implementation.
- Link provider practices with the Healthier Living Workshops, walking programs and other Blueprint for Health activities in the community.

***Information Technology (IT)*** is the most *powerful tool* to enable health care providers to monitor patient needs and support clinical decisions. Expectation: Communities will promote participation by local providers in the statewide chronic Care Information System (CCIS) that supports implementation of the Blueprint. This includes:

- Identify a local IT lead to assist with technology requirements for automated data feeds into the local Electronic Medical Record and the Vermont Health Record.
- Facilitate provider engagement and implementation of the information system to proactively identify and manage individuals with diabetes, and track clinical results.

### **Inviting Community Participation**

- The Department of Health will issue a “request for proposal” to invite communities to participate.
- Communities are defined by the service area of the local hospital
- The proposal must describe how the applicant will address the requirements identified above.
- Applicants are eligible for grant funding from the department and must identify local contributions of cash and in-kind services
- For more information contact: Eileen Girling RN, MPH, Director, Vermont Blueprint for Health. Vermont Department of Health, PO Box 70, Burlington, VT 05402. (802) 865-7705 [egirlin@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:egirlin@vdh.state.vt.us)

January 4, 2006